PROGNOZ-6 AUTOMATIC SPACE STATION LAUNCHED

LD221216Y Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1140 GMT 22 Sep 77 LD

[Text] Moscow, 22 September, TASS--The automatic station "Prognoz-6" was launched in the Soviet Union today at 0351 Moscow time in accordance with the space research program. It is intended to continue the research begun in 1972 by the "Prognoz" automatic observatory.

Like the previous five stations in the series, "Prognoz-6" will conduct research into the corpuscular and electromagnetic radiation of the sun, solar plasma flows and magnetic fields in the space surrounding the earth with the aim of determining the influence of solar activity on the interplanatary medium and on the earth's magnetosphere, and also research into galactic ultraviolet rays, X-rays and gamma rays. Scientific apparatus built in the Soviet Union, the CSSR and France has been installed on board the station to conduct this research, in accordance with the program of international cooperation in the field of space research. The station weighs 910 kilograms.

The "Prognoz-6" station has been put into a highly elliptical orbit as an earth satellite, with the following parameters: maximum distance from the earth's surface 197,900 km, minimum 498 km, period of rotation round the earth 94 hours 48 minutes, inclination of orbit 65 degrees.

The station was put into its designed trajectory from an intermediate earth satellite orbit.

Apart from scientific apparatus, the station also has on board: a radio transmitter operating on frequency 928.4 megahertz, a radio system for precision measuring of orbit elements and a radiotelemetry system for transmitting data on the operation of the instruments and scientific apparatus to earth.

According to telemetry information, the systems and apparatus on board are operating normally. The coordinating and computing center and institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences are processing the incoming information.

'UNUSUAL' NATURAL PHENOMENON OBSERVED IN KARELIA

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[Text] Petrozavodsk 22 September, TASS--The inhabitants of Petrozavodsk, capital of the Soviet Republic of Karelia, have witnessed an unusual natural phenomenon. On 20 September, at about 0400 a huge star suddenly flared up in the dark sky, impulsively sending shafts of light to the earth. This star moved slowly toward Petrozavodsk and, spreading out over it in the form of a medusa, hung there, showering the city with a multitude of very fine rays which created an image of pouring rain.

After some time the luminescent rays ceased. The "medusa" turned into a bright semicircle and resumed its movement in the direction of Lake Onega, the horizon of which was shrouded in gray cloud. A semicircular pool of bright light, red in the middle and white at the sides, then formed in this shroud. This phenomenon, according to the testimony of eyewitnesses, lasted 10-12 minutes.

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The director of the Petrozavodsk hydrometeorological observatory, Yu, Gromov, told a TASS correspondent that the staff of the Karelian meteorological service have not previously observed analogies of this kind in nature. What caused this phenomenon and its nature remains a riddle, because the weather observation posts did not record any severe deviations in the atmosphere, either in the previous 24 hours or in the time period prior to it.

We also know, stressed Yu. Gromov, that no technical experiments were being carried out at the time. However, although it left behind no material evidence, it is also impossible to describe this rare phenomenon as a mirage, as there were many eyewitnesses who observed it from various parts of the city and whose evidence is identical on many points.

SOVIET WOMEN SET WORLD FLIGHT RECORD IN IL-62

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[Text] Moscow, September 22, TASS--Two world records were set today by the flagship of Aeroflot, the IL-62 jet passenger plane. According to preliminary data, both ground-based instruments and instruments on board the plane recorded that the IL-62, piloted by a crew of six women, had set a world distance record along a closed route--10,388 kilometres. The second world record--average speed along a closed route of 10,000 kilometres, now amounts to 804 kilometres per hour. The plane landed at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport at 15 hours 22 minutes today.